



TOWN OF OCEAN CITY

The White Marlin Capital of the World

Friday, February 7, 2025

Maryland General Assembly
House Appropriations Committee
120-121 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Bill:	HB432 – Locally Operated Transit Systems – Mandatory Funding – Inflation Adjustment (Local Transit Sustainability Act)
Position:	SUPPORT

Chair Barnes, Vice-Chair Chang, and the Honorable Committee:

Last year I appeared before this body representing Ocean City Transportation supporting sustained funding for Maryland's Locally Operated Transit Systems (LOTS). Governor Moore signed that into law last May. I am here again to support House Bill 432, to protect that funding in the face of inflation.

I spoke last year about the important mission that many of my colleagues across the state serve, in terms of providing equitable access to food, healthcare, jobs, and other vital resources to people who, for whatever reason, are not able to drive themselves. We serve that mission in Ocean City as well. And I reminded you about Ocean City's additional commitment to provide a safe and convenient alternative to impaired driving. Both of these are equally important, equally life-sustaining missions.

While we applaud the legislature's action last year providing mandated sustained funding for Maryland's Locally Operated Transit Systems, we remain concerned that in the face of inflation we may still be forced to cut services year-over-year. In my own agency, we recently saw a 14% one-year jump in the cost of wages, fuel, parts, and labor while deploying essentially equivalent service levels. The cost of procuring a new 60-foot articulating transit bus, the cornerstone of our fleet, increased 18% from last year to this year. If funding does not grow to match these rising costs, the effect hits our constituents directly -- either in terms of fare increases, or service cuts, or both. Stated another way – in the face of inflationary pressures, flat funding is diminishing funding.

We cannot emphasize strongly enough how vital your support is in keeping our services sustainable. For all the reasons I mentioned at the outset, at the risk of sounding melodramatic, this truly is a life-or-death decision. We implore you to report favorably on House Bill 432. We like to say that Ocean City is "Somewhere to Smile About" and we ask you to do your part to help us keep it that way.

Thank you once again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Shearman, Jr., CCTM
Transportation Manager, Town of Ocean City, Maryland

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